

## 35th Anniversary Issue

# Architectural Details ♦

Robert Carl Williams Associates, PC  
Pittsfield, Vermont

Principals: Daniel J. Pratt, A.I.A., president  
Robert Carl Williams, founder

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### Killington's New Post Office:

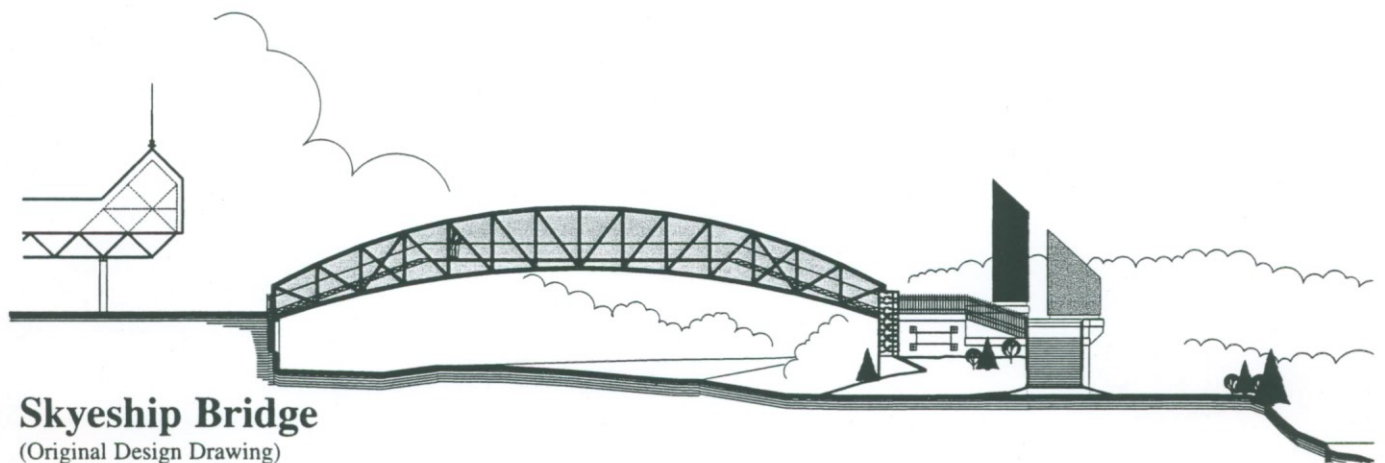
After many years of inadequate space and year-long waiting lists for post office boxes, Killington residents will finally have a new post office. The 12,000-square foot building, owned by the Rome Family Corporation, also contains two retail shops and offices.

Designed in a New England contemporary style by Architect Dan Pratt, president of Robert Carl Williams Associates, the two-story building is located across from the current post office on U.S. Route 4, just west of the Route 100 North

intersection. Bernie Rome, president of Rome Family Corporation, is the developer of the project. Begun in June, it is expected to be completed and ready for occupancy this fall.

"This is the fourth year in a row that we've had a construction project here in Killington," said Rome, "and it is the third project designed for us by Dan Pratt." Pratt has also designed two major additions at the Ski Shack. "My hope is that this building will become a town center," said Rome. "It was designed to coordinate with other buildings around it, and will be consistent with the Ski Shack just down the road."

"Bernie is making a significant contribution to the Killington area," said Pratt, "and we appreciate that he has turned to us at Robert Carl Williams Associates to help him realize his vision."



### Skyeship Bridge

(Original Design Drawing)

*A new pedestrian walkway that connects Killington's Skyeship Base Station with its parking area across Route 4. Originally submitted in 1994 with the Skyeship base station master plan by Robert Carl Williams Associates, Architects and Planners, Daniel J. Pratt A.I.A. the designer of the bridge said, "I am delighted to see this significant structure is now in place. Not only will it be safer for the pedestrians, it forms a great gateway to the region."*

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## 35 Years of Fine Design...a retrospective

When I was 30, driven by the energy of youth and dedication to the beautiful (along with other things), I began my career, hoping to make the world better. It is not unlike

by Robert Carl Williams

the dream of many young people, although my orientation was strongly philosophical, less oriented toward the amassing of wealth than

to the accrual of personal values.

The strong orientation to what I saw as the higher goals of architecture was made manifest by the location where I chose to make my stand, i.e., upper New England and more specifically central Vermont before there was an adequate highway system into the state. At that time it took five hours to get to Killington from Boston on a winter night. As far as Stowe was concerned, you might never arrive there.

Since there was little prospect of financially prospering in my practice, I chose instead to pour my energies into quality of design. While this was seldom profitable, it was a worthy life goal.

Along with my partner at the time, Hugh Kopald, a friend from the University of Tennessee, I began a modest undertaking: the design and tasteful placement of homes in a rural mountain landscape. We chose a 165-acre plot in Pittsfield, Vermont as our initial site with no plans of expansion. Our only objective was the creation of the beautiful, and we hoped that there were buyers somewhere out there who would appreciate this approach.

Over the years we were blessed with an on-rush of cus-



*In 1973, this custom home was designed using vertical elements as a motif. We also achieved an interesting massing arrangement by overhanging the living room area thus giving the design a rich interplay of light and shadow.*



*In 1979, this home was designed for its mountainous siting where materials of natural quality, fieldstone and dark exterior siding, were chosen for their compatibility with the landscape surrounding the home.*

tomers from all parts of the world. Somehow they managed to find us up the Michigan Road, off the black-top. Over time we planned and created six colonies in the central Vermont area, expanding our operation to include construction permitting, property management, and resale of homes, along with what drove the whole thing - design. All six colonies are today alive and well and thriving within the context of their varied Vermont townships.

There were approximately 500 homes built over the 35 years (early '60s to '97), beginning with the first, a modest structure of three bedrooms, priced completely for \$15,500. The first two homes were brought to market in 1962.

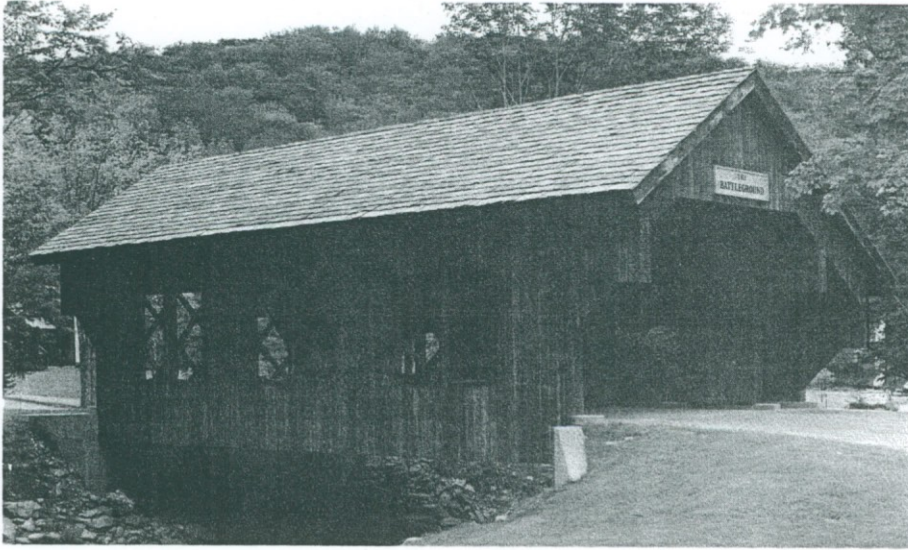
It was an exciting time for us; each home was a new expression of design. The earlier homes were mostly built on speculation and sold after completion or during construction. Later, buyers would contract with us in advance for the design and construction of homes.

The early idea of our colonies entailed the careful master planning of the colony, incorporating common land and facilities which would later become owned by the community at large and would serve to reduce density of the colony, thus improving privacy which we felt most important to our newly evolving concept.

As the years continued, Hawk Corporation grew in size and stature and also grew and improved in its abilities to produce more sophisticated design and construction. The Hawk Corporation also grew in its assets from an initial investment of \$26,500 to 8 million (much more if the lots were valued at market price) in 18 years. I was President and CEO, and we

*(Continued on page 3)*

## 35 Years of Fine Design...a retrospective



*Not given to be "outdone" by the old timers, we took on the challenge of a covered bridge design for the Battleground condominium project in Warren, VT. As a point of interest, this bridge has been used on some Vermont postcards as an example of Vermont covered bridges.*

*(Continued from page 2)*

were funded mostly on borrowed money and astute land purchases. Within the last colony created at Salt Ash in Plymouth, Vermont, homes had advanced in size and increased in value to an average price of \$400,000, all inclusive.

Our homes could still be designed and built for much less than this figure, although our customers seemed to have an increasing appetite for larger and more expensive structures.

Perhaps the most important and abiding principle in what we consider the stewardship of Vermont mountain land, is the placement of our homes (their siting) within their natural settings.

It was the underlying intent of the whole venture to create homes of lasting quality which would elevate the lives and spirits of their owners, even alter their lives for the better, a worthy objective I still believe in today. My own reward has been the fulfillment of a life purpose.

In 1980 my division managers mounted a clandestine plan to oust me from the company of my creation. It was a bitter reminder of human nature driven by ambition. Without rancor, but deeply hurt, I allowed the takeover of Hawk. This took the company in an entirely different direction, emphasizing hotel operations and with plans to grow the company much larger than I thought the market would allow.

For whatever reason, depending on whose sentiments you share, the company failed in 1990.

However, when I left the Hawk Corporation, I took with me my architectural design staff as well as my beloved secre-

tary of many years, Betty Loomer. Together we formed a new architectural office which now resides as an adjunct to my home in Pittsfield, and from there we continued to control the architecture and planning aspects of the Hawk operation until its day of financial failure.

At this pivotal point of my architectural career and life, I was set free to sail in the winds of new opportunities and challenges.

A key player in this drama was my present-day partner Daniel J. Pratt, who came with me in my exodus from Hawk and has risen to full partnership in Robert Carl Williams Associates.

Daniel brought excellent design talents and disciplines to our practice and has taken the company from primarily residential design to a product mix extending into the commercial world of fine retail shopping centers, hospitals, pharmacies and a number of other diverse projects like Killington's Skyeship Base Station, Snowshed Base Lodge, and Rams Head Base Lodge.

One of the largest projects we designed after my leaving Hawk was the Sunrise community at Bear Mountain which was closed down in a political action by the State of Vermont prematurely after only 1/3 of the project had been built out.

Today, Daniel heads the company as the President and CEO, while I continue my own active contribution to the office on a reduced basis. But I continue my lifelong goals today as I first did 35 years ago.

It is our clients who have shared our vision that have enabled us to continue that dream.